

Newport Forest Saturday March 5 2005

3:30 - 5:30 pm

Weather: prec. 14 mm*; calm; clear, LM 5 C; FCF 5 C

Purpose: to feed birds, get snow reading

Participants: Kee

A snowplow had blocked the gate, so I left the van by the roadside and walked into the property. I brought with me several thousand RB seeds that I picked last week (plus some SY seeds collected last year), but did not have the energy to walk over to the WM to sow them. At the trailer, I filled the two tray feeders (peanuts only - no regular birdseed around), the peanut feeder and the two suet feeders.

Both the Thames and Fleming Creek are open and running at near-normal levels. I went down to the creek to check on conditions there and was dismayed to see that not one sapling of the many that had been sprouting there was visible (including my two TTs!). Had they been swept away? That seemed unlikely. Then I noticed that the entire shoreline, plus the adjacent floodplain, was covered with about an inch of loose ice. It appeared to be left over from a December flood when the river backed up into the creek and remained there long enough to form an inch of ice. Then the river water receded and the ice came down on all the saplings, folding them flat against the earth. Probably many are damaged.

I made no observations of any kind (spent half an hour napping in Tr), except for the tracks of a White-footed Mouse that went out toward the weather station from the trailer. I noticed that every time the tracks led through a patch of winter weeds (old goldenrod and sunflowers) they disappeared entirely. The mouse must have climbed the stems and leapt from weed to weed. (They are good climbers.)

Note: Harvey has become very sick, with cancer in three different locations.

birds: American Crow (EW); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Dark-eyed Junco (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

*water equivalent